

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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AMEMBASSY AMMAN IMMEDIATE

USDEL AQABA

INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA

AMEMBASSY ATHENS

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY NICOSIA

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS

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SUBJ: FEBRUARY 13 EC FONMINS MEETING: GENERAL BRIEFING

1. IRISH POLITICAL DIRECTOR NOEL DORR BRIEFED US FEBRUARY 14 ON RESULTS OF EC FOREIGN MINISTERS' MEETING OF PREVIOUS DAY. MOST IMPORTANT DISCUSSIONS WERE ON EURO ARAB DIALOGUE, CYPRUS, AND (TO LESSER EXTENT) CSCE. SEPTELS COVER THESE THREE ITEMS. OTHER ITEMS DISCUSSED WERE: PREPARATIONS FOR FORTHCOMING "SUMMIT", PROCEDURE FOR REPLIES TO POLITICAL QUESTIONS IN EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, UN PROBLEMS, AND PORTUGAL. THESE DISCUSSIONS ARE SUMMARIZED BELOW.

2. AGENDA FOR MARCH 10/11 SUMMIT:

(A) HEADS OF GOVERNMENT ARE EXPECTED TO HAVE THEIR HANDS FULL WITH QUESTION OF BRITISH RENEGOTIATION. THIS WILL LEAVE LITTLE TIME FOR INPUTS FROM EC POLITICAL-COOPERATION STRUCTURE. FONMINS, THEREFORE, SPENT LITTLE TIME DISCUSSING SUMMIT. MINISTERS DID FEEL, HOWEVER, THAT HEADS OF GOVERNMENT WOULD HAVE TO ENGAGE IN SOME BRIEF DISCUSSION OF CSCE.

(B) WE ASKED FOR CLARIFICATION OF A "DISPUTE" BETWEEN FRENCH AND SMALL EC COUNTRIES WHICH HAS BEEN PICKED UP BY PRESS. DORR, UNDERSTANDABLY, WAS RELUCTANT TO COMMENT. HE SAID THIS WAS A THEOLOGICAL ISSUE ON FRAMEWORK FOR NEXT SUMMIT. WE GATHER THAT FRENCH WANT SUMMIT TO BE VERY INFORMAL AND THAT SMALL COUNTRIES FEAR FRENCH PROPOSAL WOULD ALLOW DOMINATION BY BIG COUNTRIES. IRELAND AND OTHER SMALL COUNTRIES, THEREFORE, WANT MEETING TO BE HELD IN FRAMEWORK OF COMMUNITY INSTITUTIONS. IRELAND BELIEVES THAT TREATY OF ROME HAS IMPORTANT SAFEGUARDS FOR RIGHTS OF SMALL COUNTRIES. INFO ADDRESSEES MAY GET MORE DETAILED RUNDOWN. IN ANY CASE, FITZGERALD AND SAUVAGNARGUES PUT ON A DISPLAY OF AMICABILITY FOLLOWING THE MEETINGS.

3. REPLIES IN EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT: LAST EC SUMMIT DECIDED THAT EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT SHOULD BE ASSOCIATED MORE CLOSELY WITH POLITICAL-COOPERATION ACTIVITIES OF EC. IT WAS, THEREFORE, AGREED THAT PARLIAMENTARY QUESTIONS COULD BE ASKED ON POLITICAL SUBJECTS. AS A SMALL COUNTRY, IRELAND IS HAPPY WITH THIS AS A STEP TOWARD POLITICAL INTEGRATION. CONFIDENTIAL

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SOME PROCEDURAL DECISIONS MUST, HOWEVER, BE TAKEN BY EC AS A WHOLE. IRELAND IS THUS ASKING FOR GUIDELINES ON SUCH MATTERS AS KINDS OF QUESTIONS THAT CAN BE ASKED, TIMING OF REPLIES, CLEARANCE REQUIRED BEFORE ANSWERS CAN BE GIVEN, AND SO ON. NO SUBSTANTIVE DECISIONS HAVE BEEN TAKEN.

4. UN PROBLEMS:

(A) MINISTERS WERE VERY AWARE OF UNGA DECLINE AND SEVERAL OF THEM WANTED TO GET STATEMENTS "OFF THEIR CHESTS." THERE WAS, HOWEVER, NOTHING APPROACHING A DECISION. NOT ALL MINISTERS WERE EQUALLY PESSIMISTIC. DORR BELIEVES THAT, AS A RESULT OF MINISTERS' MEETING, THERE WILL BE SOME MOVEMENT TOWARD "MORE COHERENT" EC POSITION AT NEXT UNGA. SUBJECT OF CONSULTATIONS WITH US WAS NOT MENTIONED DURING DISCUSSIONS, THOUGH DORR SAID THAT MINISTERS WERE CERTAINLY AWARE OF OUR SIMILAR CONCERNS.

(B) THERE WAS ALSO BRIEF DISCUSSION ABOUT NEXT PRESIDENCY OF UNGA. WEO GROUP PRESUMABLY "HAS IT FOR THE ASKING," BUT THERE IS WORK TO BE DONE ON PRESENTING BEST CANDIDATE. SPAIN AND TURKEY HAVE ALREADY EXPRESSED INTEREST. MINISTERS DID NOT DISCUSS THIS, BUT DORR THINKS THERE WAS GENERAL AWARENESS THAT SPANISH AND TURKISH CANDIDATES WOULD NOT BE ATTRACTIVE IN CURRENT CIRCUMSTANCES. AUSTRALIA'S INTEREST WAS NOTED BUT AUSTRALIA HAD THE DISABILITY OF HAVING HELD THE PRESIDENCY BEFORE. THE NINE LIKE THORN OF LUXEMBOURG AND WILL DISCRETELY SOUND OUT AUSTRALIANS ON THIS POSSIBILITY. DANISH CANDIDACY WOULD PROBABLY HAVE TO GIVE WAY IF THORN WERE SERIOUS, ALTHOUGH DORR STRESSED THAT THIS WAS HIS PERSONAL THINKING RATHER THAN CONSENSUS OF MINISTERS.

5. PORTUGAL: THERE WAS NO SUBSTANTIVE DEBATE. MINISTERS SAID A FEW NICE WORDS ABOUT SOAMES AND CALLAGHAN VISITS AND EXPRESSED THEIR INTEREST IN ENCOURAGING DEMOCRATIC DEVELOPMENT. RENDAHL

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